

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

A. Please replace the specification beginning with paragraph 1, line 3, on page 1 with the following rewritten specification:

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to apparatus for handling loads, particular for lifting, positioning and/or tilting large or small and/or heavy loads.

SUMMARY

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided load handling apparatus comprising at least one first elongate member having means for engaging and/or lifting a load and at least one second elongate member pivotally connected to said first-mentioned elongate member, and actuating means in the form of at least one airbag assembly co-operating with said first and second elongate members to change the angular orientation of said first and second elongate members relative to each other upon inflation and deflation of the airbag, and characterized in that said at least one airbag assembly includes at least one connecting strap as part thereof, said connecting strap passing around a rod provided as part of the load handling apparatus to secure the airbag with the apparatus.

The first member may engage directly with the load to be handled, or with additional elongate members disposed so as to transmit the relative movement of said first and second members to the load, which is thereby manipulated as required.

In its basic embodiment, the at least one first member is about twice the length of said at least one second member, but the invention also encompasses a variant in which the two members are of equal length. This latter embodiment may be achieved by affixing to the second member an extension member which lengthens the second member to a length which is equal to the first member. Alternatively, this latter embodiment may be achieved by providing the first member as a rigid member and the second member as a broken member comprising two pivotally connected arms of equal length.

It is preferred that said "at least one" first and second members actually each comprise a pair of members, which will hereinafter be referred to as the first pair and the second pair respectively, each member of each pair being disposed generally parallel to the other member of the same pair and the two pairs being connected together by means of a pivot rod.

~~The actuating means may comprise a hydraulic or pneumatic mechanism, but it is preferred that the actuation means comprises an~~ Typically the ~~airbag which can be~~ inflated by means of a airline, high pressure air bottle, battery operated compressor or the like. Alternatively, the airbag may connected via suitable coupling means to a bolt-on air reservoir, such that the apparatus may be converted into a low profile self-levelling apparatus.

The airbag is conveniently disposed close to the point of pivotal connection between said first and second arms such that the rod is also the pivotal connection and is constructed

such that inflation of the bag will cause a greater degree of inflation in the distal regions of the bag furthest away from the pivotal connection and a much lesser degree of inflation in the proximal region closest to the pivotal connection. Thus, the distal edge of the airbag inflates over an arc which is typically up to 90 degrees, such that the degree of tilt thereby imparted is up to 45 degrees.

Preferably, a lifting plate extends between the first pair of arms, which may also include means for connecting an attachment at an upper end thereof. Instead or in addition, a lifting table or platform may extend between the first and second pairs of arms (in the case where these are of equal length), to provide low profile vertical lifting upon inflation of the airbag.

~~However, the actuating means may alternatively be a hydraulically operated wedge device which may be driven laterally to achieve the same result.~~

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided an airbag having a number of interconnecting compartments, ~~wherein~~ inflation of the airbag is restrained at one edge or part thereof characterised in that said airbag includes at said restrained edge or part at least one connecting strap, said connecting strap provided to pass round a rod and secure the airbag thereto.

~~According to a third aspect of the present invention there is provided load handling apparatus comprising at least one first elongate member having means for engaging a~~

~~load and at least one second elongate member pivotally connected to said first mentioned elongate member, and an airbag co-operating with said first and second elongate members to change the angular orientation of said first and second elongate members relative to each other upon inflation/deflation of the airbag.~~

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

B. Please insert into the specification at line 25, on page 4 the following:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED EMBODIMENTS

C. Please insert into the specification at line 2, on page 10 the following:

What is claimed is: